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THE WAR

WITH A PLEA FOR ITS LOFTY
AND DEMOCRATIC PROSECUTION
TOWARD A SUCCESSFUL END

A SERMON PREACHED BY
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THE WAR

with a plea for its lofty and democratic prosecution towards a successful end.

They shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruninghooks.—Micah IV: 3.

In speaking to you this morning upon such an important and such a soul-reaching subject as this I feel that it is not only just and fair on my part but truly needful and essential that I remind you, at the very beginning, of one or two things concerning myself, and that I make a plain and an unmistakable declaration of my position in the matter of war as such.

After all it is best and wisest that the ground should be thoroughly cleared at the start, that a man should represent himself properly, and state his position beyond any question or doubt. It never does any earthly good, nor does it serve any real and moral purpose to sail beneath false colours, and leave a wrong impression. The old saying is as true today as ever it was: "Be sure your sins will find you out."

Therefore, in the first place, I wish to remind you that I am not an American, but a Scotchman, born and bred and pretty well buttered so. So extremely Scotch that I have now given up all thought or hope of ever quite getting over it, since it shows so plainly in my face and manner, and even yet, after so many years in this land of America, a tiny little trifle in my tongue too. While one might not catch it at first or on the surface,—even becoming accustomed to it—if one listens attentively and closely my tongue bewaryeth me as Scotch.

Of course I am free to confess that sometimes I have fondly and foolishly imagined that I had overcome the tongue part of it, and could almost speak like a regular and a civilized American. I remember how childishly delighted I was when, during my last visit to the country of my birth, and even to the city of London, I was addressed and spoken to for quite a considerable length of time as a true-born native American. But here, and especially in New England, I know that it is utterly useless. When I leave the city of Concord, or even this pulpit, to speak anywhere else I am soon made conscious—by looks or nudges or smiles—of my

"Scotchiness." The dear lady of this parish who in her pity and sympathy for me once remarked, "But, Mr. Black, can't you really speak English?" was only typical. Whether I can or not, it is still true that I speak it through the rain and the heather of old Scotland. It takes a lot, more than long residence in another land or even honest naturalization, to squeeze the rain and take the odour of the heather from a Scotchman's bones and tongue. And I wonder is there any reason in God's world why it should and need be otherwise?

Moreover, I desire to remind you that besides being a Scotchman I am a minister also. Just an out-and-out, regular, and orthodox minister who preaches each and every Sunday in this Christian Church, and who, during the week, does the ordinary and the routine work of a minister. I am no orator, no lecturer, no politician, no other. I am, as I wish to be known, and love to be taken, your minister.

And I say this that there may not be even the slightest misapprehension in your minds or misunderstanding between us; and that you may know right now and once for all that as such I am naturally the open and avowed opponent and antagonist of war as such; and that I loathe and abominate it, and hate it with a fierce and an awful hatred. To me war as such is simply horrible and atrocious—the very limb of hell and the devil—maybe, but more probably maybe not, fitted for a past and primitive age of human development—or near-savagery; but in our present state of evolution and our present advancement in civilization a cruel shame and black disgrace, and an ugly and a wanton sin.

I have not the slightest sympathy with, or good feeling towards war as such: I can find no sanction or reason or excuse for it. To all who would seek to uphold it as necessary, or useful and good for the individual and the race—economically, socially, morally, religiously—I delight to give the lie direct. Too lately, keenly, personally have I undergone the torture of having many and many of my best and dearest boyhood friends and companions lost to me and the world and its usefulness, of having three of my own brothers in blood by the same dear mother called from a large and a wonderful share in the earth's upbuilding to spend their days in mud-soaked and blood-soaked trenches, giving themselves as billets for an unseen and unknown enemy's bullets, to be able for a moment to see and to admit war's usefulness and good. And there are—and there MUST be—if we are human beings at all, and not mere beasts of prey born to

squabble and fight and die—other and better ways of solving our difficulties, our economic and moral and social difficulties: and other and better methods of keeping the human soul and the human race alive and virile and godly than by slaying and butchering one another. (Oh, if there are any other peoples in God's great universe, or angels good or bad, there must be laughter and tears of mockery and pity in their midst at our dull and stupid and brutal assininity.)

Aye, it is true, my people, that we want a trained and a disciplined people, a healthy, rich-blooded and courageous people; that we want a people that can use its weapons and aim them straight. But is bloody war the only way to it? Are the only weapons guns and cannons and bayonets? When we are taught to aim straight shall the only target be the bodies of our own fellowmen? Are not the spade and the plough and the hoe as good for human development and handling as the sword and the gun? Does not God's earth offer and open to us a field wide and deep and strenuous enough for all our courage and our skill? "To tunnel her mountains, to drain her swamps, to combat her diseases, and to explore her unknown territories; to become master of her sea and her land, of her heights and her depths; to wring from her those jealously guarded secrets which, once disclosed, will only make man the SUPERMAN." Is there not enough here to make and keep man MAN in body and in soul without turning in anger and hate and blood upon our own kith and kin, and upon ourselves?

I cannot let you know too simply and too plainly my position, and the one and only reason for my speaking this morning. It is because I hate war so bitterly and deeply; because I feel in my heart its degradation and sin, and its utter madness; and because I would have it ended forever. It is also because I believe you are all of the same opinion and the same desire. I do not for a moment imagine that there is a man or a woman in this Church this morning who has a word or a thought in behalf and praise of war as such; but hates and despises and abhors it to the uttermost.

Indeed, no one can know anything of the life-history in toil and pain and blood, of this great and glorious Republic and still deny that it has ever been the enemy of war, and closely and dearly wedded to the cause of peace. The pioneer fathers of this nation did not leave their homes and friends across the Atlantic, brave the stormy seas, and endure the rudeness and hardship and

death of a new and strange land for the love of WAR, but for the love of PEACE. The makers and builders of the fabric of this country did not make and build with such pains and endeavour for the glory of WAR, but for the glory of PEACE. With all the many faults and failings, with all the deviations and aberrations from the straight and single path, the vision and the labour of America have been for PEACE,—PEACE AND THE FREEDOM OF PEACE FOR MAN TO LIVE ON EARTH, AND WORK AND SERVE HIS FELLOWS AND HIS GOD.

No one can look, with fairness and honesty, into the record of these past two years and a half without being convinced that the leaders and rulers and the people of this nation have done all in their power to uphold and preserve and further PEACE, even hoping against hope, and running the risk of being called knaves and cowards for their trouble,—bearing and suffering, mourning and hoping and labouring much for its dear sake.

Even today, amid all the noise of hurrying feet, the call to battle, the tramp of armies, and the horrid rattle of guns I maintain that it is not war as such in which we are interested, and in which we are engaged, but the gigantic labour and the titanic struggle for human PEACE. It is, is it not, the determination on our part that the mastery of this earth shall no more rest with the biggest and the bloodiest battalions, that right shall no more depend upon might, that a few evil and scheming and unscrupulous men, for their own glory or advancement or safety, shall no longer decide in cabinet and secret that millions and millions of God's good men shall leave their peaceful homes, and honest labours, to fight each other in a mud-stained and blood-stained battlefield, and through their wicked designs, lie dead in ghastly heaps; but that on this goodly and godly earth there shall be no more such wars, no more such barbarities, no more such sin, but PEACE AND PROSPERITY AND FREEDOM AND LOVE.

Having this cause so clearly in our minds and hearts, in all our strength ready and willing to stand or fall, plead or fight, live or die for it! Greatly daring, greatly doing, greatly demanding! Individually sure and nationally determined that Right must win and Right will win; that Peace must reign and Peace will reign, though all the might and power of hell be arrayed against them! As a nation and people seeking and striving with all our power to bring order out of the present chaos,

save liberty from oppression, and see that justice and mercy and righteousness and liberty and peace shall not fall and fail in God's world, but shall live and prosper! "With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right."

Is not this so? We are not waging war today for war as such,—for any personal glory or gain, love of conquest and greed of dirty territory, from spite or hate or envy of others. We are daring and venturing for the highest and dearest of human hopes and rights. And never—let me say it as one born in another land—never has a nation, or this nation, had such clean hands, such a clear heart, and such a serene conscience as now.

Too well and bitterly do we realize what love of gain and conquest and money has done when we compare the Germany of Yesterday which was our friend with the Germany of Today which is our enemy. Yesterday Germany was a poor nation. So poor, we are told, that it was the common saying in Napoleon's time that while France had the empire of the earth, and Britain had the empire of the sea, Germany, with its poets and philosophers, had the empire of the air. But in the midst of its poverty in gold, how magnificently rich it was in the things of the mind: Lessing, Kant, Schelling, Goethe! In music, Bach and Beethoven, Mozart and Handel! Today Germany is rich, and has given itself to the development and massing of wealth. It is a country of mills and factories, of glowing furnaces, of huge financial operations. But where is the poetry, the philosophy, the music, the religion? In these real treasures of a nation and life what a stillness and barrenness have fallen on the Rhineland! All the more impressive and oppressive because of the rattling of swords, the noise of guns, the roar of cannons,—the brutal and savage cruelty and murder and suicide.

O German Wealth of Today! What a travesty! What a mockery! What a weapon for good and glory turned to bloody hurt and suicide! Like Saul of old taking his sword, and falling upon it! It is the **UGLIEST TRUTH IN THE WHOLE HELLISH MAELSTROM!**

The torture and suffering of Belgium are naught to this: for Belgium—though crushed and broken, carried into bondage and slavery—still lives, in spite of its desecrated temples and homes, in spite of its ravished people and trampled dead; and it will live forever to be honoured and sung by men and angels.

The bleeding of France is naught to this: for the name of France is written in the Halls of Fame, and on the hearts of men and God. Well might that Belgian soldier cry: "Do not talk of our suffering; talk of our glory. We have found ourselves!" That French soldier: "For forty-four years we have been unhappy, in darkness, without health, without faith, believing the true France dead. Resurrection has come to us." What can be said of a nation which once was, in the deepest and the highest—in song and poetry, philosophy and vision; but which has fashioned and beaten for itself a gaudy golden sword, turned it upon the world and on its own living heart, and struck a foul and an awful blow? Where there is now no more song, no more rhythm, no more laughter, no more light, no more love—nothing but hate, "Education to hate, organization of hatred, education to the desire of hatred; in whose eyes there are faith, hope, and hatred; but hatred the greatest." O God, have mercy and pity!

And there will be no recovery, no hope, until Germany, in the anguish of pain and tears,—even in heartbreaking defeat and disaster,—has refound its lost soul, learned the lesson of life, and the secret of wealth: that it is not for self-aggrandizement, self-conceit, self-possession, not for self at all, but for lowly, humble service to others and mankind in the spirit of love; and until Germany has learned that the Galilean was right when he asked, "What shall it profit a man—or a nation—if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

But since it is not so with us at this time and in this crisis, our privilege and duty are plain and simple: to recognize the issue fully, to uphold the venture boldly, and to see to it that it shall not, and cannot falter and fail through us; from lack of honesty and integrity, labour and love, and courage and sacrifice.

Heaven forbid, my people, that by any thought or act on our parts we lower the national ideal of the hour, and besmirch its glorious cause, that we degrade and despise the lofty and magnificent standard set by our President. Let others be or do as they may, as for us and our house we will only serve the highest and our God. As a lover of this land which has done so much for me, given so much to me, means so much to me; and as a greater sufferer up to the present than perhaps any of you here this morning, this is close to my heart, and my dearest desire.

And heaven forbid that for any reason we fail our country's need. What would we think of a man's avowed friendship for another, or of a man's vaunted love for home and wife and chil-

dren, which could dodge and shirk, and dared not face the fact of sacrifice? What must be our opinion of a citizen of this country, this state, this city today who calls it his own, believes in its righteousness, keeps shouting his patriotism at the top of his lungs, and waves the flag to the furthest breeze, and yet is not ready and willing to offer and give his heart and soul and life and all for it. Is not it the one test with us today as a people of our belief in the justice and righteousness of our cause, and of our real love and loyalty to our land? Not what we say and not our display; not our shouting and bunting; but our eager and almost wanton willingness to give to the utmost and to sacrifice to death.

God knows! there is a cheap and a nasty thing which passes too frequently for patriotism,—a narrow, blustering, noisy, evil thing so often the refuge and haven of knaves and cowards, to be recognized by its boisterous clamour, its silly music-hall ditties, and its stupid and ugly jingoism. Sometimes it almost seems that the man with the strongest pair of lungs, the most rabid jingoism, and the biggest "Hip Hurray," considers himself, and is considered by others, to be the hero and saviour and patriot of his land, no matter what his record may be or how shady and evil his life,—even if he be an arrant craven and a proven dastard at heart. But we know today, and must know, for we will surely know to our joy or sorrow in the near future, that patriotism is much more than show and sound and noise; that if a man is bad himself his patriotism never can be good; if a man is a coward himself his patriotism never can be brave; and that patriotism without purity and courage and sacrifice is a farce and a sin, since in the last issue any real desire towards and any real love for one's country is moral and a sterling virtue.

True patriotism is always deeper than the lip and the throat, and more than the boast or the flapping of a flag. It belongs to the very heart of a man, and is the outcome of the purity and righteousness of his soul, and the highest and best of his life. The memories of a glorious past are in it; the recollection of God-like deeds is in it; the awful sense of God is in it; all that is true and noble is in it. It is human *and* divine. This is true patriotism—this alone is patriotism—and it surely takes a man of men, true and upright, loyal and God-fearing in life and character, not a brawler in the market-place, and not a recreant, to be a patriot. AND SET AS A DIAMOND IN ITS VERY HEART IS SACRIFICE.

Indeed, there can be no escape from it for any living and aspiring human soul or nation on earth, whether in business or profession, friendship or love, religion or peace or war. It is so pervading and fundamental. So truly so that it might be said that we have only been born and nurtured, and only *are* at all, that we may undertake and undergo sacrifice, since only through it can we live and move and have our hope. We are what we are today, individually and nationally, because of the countless sacrifices of the past, and because others feared not to make the venture and embrace the Cross for us. The future will only be according to our sacrifices for it. The Cross on Calvary was not an isolated and strange event in human history, but the symbol and the magnificent illustration of a common human experience. And the man who refuses to sacrifice for himself and others, for his nation and the best, is refusing man's great responsibility, and losing his God-given dignity—shaming and despising the past, disgracing the present, and betraying the future.

Please do not misunderstand me, my people, I am not preaching to you a gospel of sacrifice for mere sacrifice's sake. I have long ago stopped thinking of it and of man and God in any such brutal and pagan way,—of man as a slave and God as his driver delighting in the swing and the bite of the lash. There is no virtue, no man, no Christlike God in such sacrifice. I am only preaching it as a great means to a greater and most wonderful end—to the dignity and divinity of men in the Kingdom of God's heart's desire. If there is ploughing and hoeing in the spring it is that there may be a rich harvesting in the fall, if there is uprooting it is only that the flowers of the garden may be the more perfect; if there is sacrifice it is only for the higher end of perfect consecration. I seek to show you that in sacrifice there is the power and the hope of giving you and others the fullest and truest life here and after: for to belong to the highest and best we know is the only life that is sweet and full here, and that has a glimmer beyond.

“A good man never dies—
In worthy deed and prayer
And helpful hands, and honest eyes,
If smiles or tears be there:
Who lives for you and me—
Lives for the world he tries
To help—he lives eternally.
A good man never dies.

"Who lives to bravely take
His share of toil and stress,
And, for his weaker fellow's sake,
Makes every burden less,—
He may at last seem worn—
Lie fallen—hands and eyes
Folded—yet, though we mourn and mourn,
A good man never dies."

And I am confident that this comes straight home to one and all of us at this time, in nation and state and city—to one and all of us in this Church of Christ this morning, men and women, old and young, rich and poor, strong and weak. To play our own individual part and take our own full share according to our opportunity and ability, and strength and means. Under the present circumstances I know of no loophole, no excuse, no exemption for any. We are all conscripted. It is not a matter for SOME, but for ALL: it is not a question of MAY or MIGHT, but a fact of MUST. If this venture is as we say it is—for peace and not for war, for freedom and not for greed—then it is OURS, ALL OF US: if it is for DEMOCRACY then it must be DEMOCRATIC. If it is not for ALL of us it is not for SOME of us; if it is not for ALL of us it is not OURS at all—AND WE ARE ALL WRONG, FATALLY AND SINFULLY WRONG. It simply cannot be undertaken properly and righteously and accomplished successfully and virtuously by SOME—fought and fed and financed by them—but only by ALL.

Personally, I will consider the national loan about to be launched a dreary and dismal failure in American principle and ideal—this country's first reverse and defeat—if it is not subscribed and over-subscribed by numbers of names as well as numbers of dollars; for while the dollars betoken the nation's mere wealth the names betoken its democracy. Personally, I will consider victory when it comes a national stain and dishonour if won by the valour and the sacrifice of some and not of all; for the justice and the victory of our present cause rests with DEMOCRACY.

Today we see shame and oppression, bloodshed and hate, the world a very whirlpool of madness, man turned against his brother in cruel and hellish war; but by our help and our sacrifice, by the help and sacrifice of our whole united nation and our God we will bring to them and to our own the dawning of a day of PEACE, even if we give our all and we die for it. We are ready, are we not, to give and die for it? As were our fathers

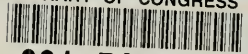


and forefathers—our Washington and our Lincoln—for these dear homes of ours, for this sweet land of ours, and for the free and peaceful democracy of men upon earth. Determined that out of the turmoil and hell of it all there shall and there must come the death of autocracy and the blossom of democracy,—the grave of ugly war and the birth of beautiful peace.

Here in this House of God this morning before man and God, in humble assurance, we once again “highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”

“They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruninghooks.”

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